

Colossians 2:8-15

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[0 : 00] Well, thank you for being here again. As David has said, I want to second that. We're glad you're here. We're glad to worship together in one place, in one body.

And I want to ask this question as we get into the text today. And it's a simple question, maybe it's a question you've heard before or considered before, and it's this. What are you looking to to fill your cup?

Maybe it's the cup of the mind. Maybe it's the cup of the heart. But the reality is for each and every one of us as humans, we have a void within us.

And it's a void that the Lord Himself made that only we would find satisfaction in Him. And the reality of the world is that this world is constantly screaming to us to take it by the hands and to fill our cup with it.

Maybe it's music and a podcast obsession. I don't know about you, I'm a podcaster. Love listening to the latest, whether it be news or information or science, whatever.

[1 : 13] I like listening to podcasts. Maybe for you, the way you take in information is what fills your cup. Maybe for some of us, entertainment is what we want to fill our hearts with, that we want to be satisfied in our hearts so we fill it with entertainment.

Whatever it is that we take in this world and try to fill our cup with, we have a text today that Paul is going to deal with. And he's going to deal with this, the fact that every single person in the world who's ever existed, made in God's image, has a cup.

And we, because we are so easy and quick to take things and throw it in there, we find ourselves constantly empty. Only Jesus provides the lasting living water that satisfies the soul.

And that is what Paul is going to talk about today. So we're going to be in Colossians 2, 8-15. What are you filling your cup with? That's the question Paul is going to beg from us.

So we're going to start in verse 8. And we're going to break this down to three sections. First is going to be simply, Christ alone is our philosophy. In answering the question of how we fill the cup of our soul, Paul is first going to focus on belief or thought, a system of thinking.

[2 : 38] And that's what philosophy is. It's a system of thinking. So let's read verse 8, just the first verse here. We're right off the cusp of 6 and 7 that talked about being rooted in Jesus.

Walk in Him as He received Him. The gospel is not only the way to Christ, it's the way in Christ to live a full life. That was His climax of the book. And out of that, here's some practical exhortation.

Verse 8, See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Here's what Paul's concern here. Ensure that, Christian, as you live your life in this world, and you interact with all that the world claims it has to offer to fill our cup.

Here's what Paul said. See to it that nobody takes you captive by what? Philosophy. Philosophy. And again, the word philosophy here refers to a system of thought, or systems of thought.

[3 : 46] This term Paul uses is very broad. It can have wide-ranging meanings, such as just teachings in general, or ponderings about life that form the way we live.

I think system of thought is the best way to describe it. But think of it this way. We all create, if that's what the word means, system of thought, we all are creating philosophies left and right in our lives. Every day, we probably create a new philosophy that we may or may not recognize as a philosophy. But here's the thing. Philosophy in and of itself is not in itself evil.

But here's what makes a philosophy evil, according to Paul. And this is powerful. Let's camp here in verse 8 for a second. He says, See to it that no one takes you captive by a philosophy, by philosophy itself, a system of thought that's coordinated with something called empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world.

Philosophies of empty deceit, human tradition, and elemental spirits of the world. But here's the negative that Paul gives that should give us some instruction. He's saying, See to it that no one takes you captive by a system of thought that is not of Christ.

[5 : 00] That is the thrust of this verse. So therefore, our first point here is Christ alone is our philosophy. For Paul, he wants the Colossians to be rooted in Jesus.

And he calls them in this verse to embrace discernment. And discernment is something in our world that we need more and more and more.

When we answer that question, What fills my cup? I invite us all to take a really sincere look at how we're answering that in our lives.

What are the systems of thought in the world today that each and every one of us go to to find meaning, truth, and overall fulfillment?

This is Paul's concern. And he says to them, See to it that no one takes you captive with philosophies that are not of Jesus. And taking captive here is a fascinating image.

[6 : 05] It conveys accurately the goal of false teachers whom Paul is likely writing about in Colossae. Most often what happens with false teachers is they come into the church and they come as wolves in sheep's clothing.

They come in professing the same beliefs, talking about the same things, worshiping the same God. This is how false teachers often arose in this time and even today. And they will become part of the group and then as they earn that trust, they will then use the trust to lead people astray with doctrines that may be Christ-adjacent, but not really of Christ.

It's a very famous way that false teachers get their rap. And here's what Paul says, The goal of these types of people is to take believers captive with that false doctrine, with those worldly philosophies.

And the term here brings up images of kidnapping. Like a bandit or a marauder, the desire of a false teacher and a teacher of a worldly philosophy to Christians is to trick and trap us in a web of false teaching and carry us away from our home.

That's what kidnappers do. Where the truth about Christ frees us, falsehood and worldly philosophies enslave us and pull us away from our home, which is Jesus and the church.

[7 : 20] Jesus said this in John 8, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. It will set you free.

The philosophy, the system of thinking that is Jesus sets us free. It doesn't take us captive. But let's go over the list quickly here because we've got a couple things going on.

We have empty deceit, human tradition, and elemental spirits of the world. Empty deceit. Paul says that the philosophy of the day would enslave them and captivate them to a point where they become like they're kidnapped.

What does that mean? Empty deceit. Let's start with that first. Empty deceit refers to the ill-intended nature of the philosophies that would be taught. He's attaching it to this idea. See to it that no one, you guys in the church, no one comes in and takes you captive with a system of thought.

But what type of system of thought? One that is ill-intended and incoherent. That's what empty deceit is referring to here. But not only that, he gives us a further paradigm to be able to discern between truth and error.

[8 : 31] Sound teaching and false teaching. And he says, secondly, according to human tradition. Now human tradition here likely refers to the broken element of all man-made ideas.

And we all know what this is like. I remember when I was a kid. I'll give you an example of a man-made broken idea. Here's one of the ideas that I had. Hey, best friend, my mom bought us a box of Twinkies to share with all seven of my siblings.

Let's take this box of Twinkies and go hide and eat it all ourselves. That was a system of thought. According to this definition, that would be a philosophy that I pitched to my friend and I entrapped him in that.

Yes! That sounds like a wonderful idea. So what did we do? We went away, ate the entire box of Twinkies. I won't tell you what happened, but it wasn't pleasant when my parents found out that we ate 12 Twinkies and didn't share one with any of my seven siblings.

That would be an example of a worldly philosophy simplified down to an absurd example. But if you take that absurd example and blow it up to something bigger, here's what you'll find.

[9 : 36] The absurdity does not leave even if the size increases. Such that when Paul says human tradition, he's referring to, quite possibly, any and all man-made idea about how to be fulfilled in this life, how to find God, how to be satisfied in our world.

Here's what Paul says. Those are empty philosophies that will take you captive and never let you go if they don't focus on Christ.

such that I would argue that Paul's definition of human tradition here could describe every religion of today that is not Christ.

Every worldview of today that does not take Jesus into account. But then thirdly, he uses this term elemental spirits. This is interesting. This is a very hard to interpret phrase in the original language, but here's essentially what I think Paul is getting at.

According to the elemental spirits of the world, we're going to see next week, we're going to dive more into the specific false teachings of this church, but specifically, what's happening here is there's a form of legalism and spiritualism and asceticism that's taking hold of these believers and starting to deceive them.

[11 : 04] All these different weird false teachings that are coming into the church at the same time. And he's referring to one of them in a shadow form here. He says, elemental spirits of the world.

And most likely, he's referring to a form of polytheism. The term literally means to line up one after the other, like A, B, C, D, E, F, G. That's what he's referring to.

The elemental spirits of the world, like all of the spirits of the world that everyone says you need to pay attention to, pay homage to, and recognize as a god. All of those individual spirits that anyone might be telling you need to worship.

Polytheism. According to any of that, and not according to the one God who truly exists, that is Jesus.

So let's talk about some modern philosophy examples that might fall into one of these categories. Empty deceit, human tradition, elemental spirits. Maybe some of these philosophies actually fit into all of them.

[12 : 03] I'm going to give a couple just basic examples of a system of thought that Paul's talking about, a philosophy. Here's an example. A better diet and exercise choices will lead to a healthier, happier life. That's a philosophy.

How about this one? Reading each day will improve my mental sharpness. That is a philosophy. Now here's the thing. Those philosophies aren't necessarily harmful. Actually, sound pretty good. Those are two that I'm specifically trying to apply to my life right now. But what are some common philosophies that may get passed around today that might tempt the willing and listening Christian who lacks discernment?

How about this one? Opening myself up to all forms of spirituality will make me a more godly person. This is rampant right now.

I've seen this on the college campus. I've seen this in the college group. I've seen this in the humanitarian world. I've seen this in the church world.

[13 : 09] Now you might say, well, what's wrong with that? This is exactly what Paul's talking about. Human tradition, elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ. Let's repeat that line. Opening myself up to all forms of spirituality will make me more godly.

But here's the reality. we need to recognize things like this, that bad theology is rampant in a lot of Christian music today. There's a song that Josh and I always talk about.

We listened to this song one time and we both heard the words and it was shocking how much the words of that song took away from God and made man the image of worship.

This happens so regularly. And the point of this text and this point is not to necessarily go and try and find all these people that are making music and Christians and judge them and condemn them. No, the point is for us to be discerning, to recognize that simply, I'm going to offer this, simply opening up our streaming account and typing in Christian music and then listening to the first song that pops up is not necessarily always going to lead us to truth.

[14 : 17] We need to be discerning and still worship God but be discerning with what we're putting into our minds. That's a form of opening ourselves up to just, you know what, I just need to worship, I'm just going to be spiritual, I just need to listen to anything.

We need to be careful. How about this, devotional books that take on the voice of Jesus and speak on his behalf. I remember being gifted one of these books and reading through it and recognizing

that I'm reading the words of somebody that intends well but was speaking as if they were Christ to me in a devotional book.

We need to be very, very careful. How about this philosophy of the world that you may come across? If I help other people's physical needs, meet them, I will feel good about myself and improve their quality of life.

I'm going to be careful here. That actually can be true. Serving other people, meeting the needs of others who are in crisis, who don't have much, who may need assistance from others who have much to give.

Those are great things and we should embrace those. Serving the widows and the orphans but be careful because I was embraced with this at the college I went to that embraced something called this social gospel that even in the name of helping people's physical needs and meeting people where they're at and blessing them with provision and resources and whatnot, the gospel was actually lost.

[15:43] And I remember this line was actually used in this circle of serving socially these people. We made their lives better and that's all that matters. Yes, you may make somebody's life better by serving a meal and providing clothing or a place to sleep.

But what really makes our lives better, church? It's the indwelling presence of Christ and the joy that he brings. I'll give one more worldly philosophy example possibly today.

I've heard this line a lot in the church. Condemning other people's religion is divisive and it's hateful and I don't really want to be a part of that. Yeah, I believe in Jesus but I want to be careful judging other people and talking bad about their religion.

Yes, we don't judge people and speak ill of them. That's not the point of this. But this has turned into what I've seen a lot is this heart of having a hard time critiquing the false religions of the world in the name of love can actually lead to something called universalism.

I've seen this time and time again. That the Bible actually allows for if somebody is willing to seek God and they have an open heart God will redeem whatever belief they had and he will bring them in anyway.

[17:00] This happens a lot. And it's from a worldly philosophy that suggests that the Bible is too judgmental, it's too restrictive when in reality we know the only way to Christ and to God is through Christ.

But here's what Paul is saying in this verse. What is ultimately the greatest importance is not even the many various forms of which false teaching can come through worldly philosophies such as some of that gave you but the fact that any worldly philosophy and here's the danger when they are not according to Jesus Christ that is the danger for Paul and it should be the danger for us.

Therefore any idea that we may have that does not require the crucial variable of the person and word of Jesus in order for its equation to work should be disregarded.

If we're looking for fulfillment in a worldly philosophy we must recognize that it will fall short. What Paul is literally suggesting here is that addition in this way by saying yes I'm a Christian but I also want to believe these things these worldly philosophies he's suggesting that by addition of those things we're actually subtracting.

So here's the application for this point recenter our life philosophy around Christ. This is a call to discernment. I want to encourage us as a church that we would be discerning in our lives.

[18:30] That we would be able to see the world around us and interact with it meaningfully. Yes we're not called to judge non-believers we're not called to go out into the streets and be the megaphone preacher that says you're all believing in false worldly philosophies and how dare you you're going to hell.

That is not what I'm calling us to. What I'm calling us to do is to recognize that in this world there's so many false ideas of what it means to be spiritual or fulfilled. And we know the answer that Jesus is the only way to spiritual fulfillment so we need to center our life's philosophy around him.

Every way of thinking that we have as Christians need to be centered around the cross. Let's move on to point number two verse 9-11 Christ alone is our fulfillment.

This builds right on that first point. Let's read verse 9-11 here. Here's what Paul says Now here's what Paul's getting at here.

We have a really specific term and he uses the term fullness or filled. He uses it twice. And here's what he's suggesting in this section that as we look for worldly philosophies to be fulfilled in this life we will be disappointed if it's not Christ.

[19 : 55] And he's going to double down and say okay not only is Christ alone our philosophy our system of thinking Christ alone is our very fulfillment. And what is that rooted in? Well he says this this is super important.

He says that in him Jesus the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. And this term means to complete or to fill up.

Here's what he just said Jesus Christ is the full essence of a divine God. Jesus possesses the substance of God in complete capacity.

Jesus is not kind of God he came out of heaven but he's a man so he can't really be God. Jesus is the exact substance of God God on high.

And here's what Paul just said we desperately need that substance which is why he says secondly in verse 10 and you have been filled in him.

[21 : 05] Here's the image Jesus is like the cup that God pours his entire himself into. So now we have the entire essence of God and it's caught up in Jesus. And then Jesus turns and there's a cup of our soul and we're standing next to him and here's what Jesus this is what this text is saying Jesus through his life, work, and death he pours that entire essence of himself into our cup and he fills our cup.

Literally Paul is saying this Jesus is the fullness of God and Christ Jesus is the fullness of you as well. All of God has been contained in Jesus and all of Jesus is now contained in us.

Which means this brothers and sisters our cup that we so desperately want to fill has only one source of filling and it is the spout of God's great love through Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins.

John Piper once described looking for fulfillment from the world and its empty philosophies as trying to hold water in a sieve. He gave this image like a person that's walking around the earth saying I'm going to try this out I'm going to try that out I'm going to believe this system I'm going to go with that religion I'm going to go with this worldview and every time they turn they're holding a sieve out and all they're collecting goes right through.

And that's kind of what Paul is saying here. He's suggesting that only Christ can patch the holes of our souls and fill the void that we are so desperate to see filled. But then he gives this image that kind of compounds the whole idea in verse 11.

[22 : 43] He says this in him also you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

I want to pause here for a second because now we get this really strange image. We're talking about being filled. We're talking about this image of a vessel and Jesus pouring in and that's amazing. Only Jesus can fill that void in our souls.

And then Paul says that's all great. Okay, circumcision. I have something to say about that. Now, we had a family party for my wife's birthday who's today and our little daughter Sadie whose birthday is tomorrow.

A lot of family and friends come over and I'm going to be really honest here. I'm not going to go into details but there's a lot of babies in the house and there's a newborn and the conversation God brought up who was a boy about the circumcision that happened at a family get together and man that was an interesting conversation.

We're all like this is not the greatest topic. Okay, I can tell you when the word circumcision gets brought up in that setting everybody starts to go, oh boy, I don't know about this.

[23 : 48] Okay, when we see it in the word of God, let's just be honest, it might seem that way too. What is going on here? You gave us this great image of being filled and now he goes in circumcision.

Well, I'm going to do this really quickly. Here's what Paul is doing with this image. We have to understand the importance and the historical purpose of it. circumcision was given to the Israelites as a sign of the covenant that they had with God Almighty.

What does that mean? It means this, that God told his people, you are my people. I've called you to myself, I have chosen you, I have pulled you out of the world, I've sanctified you, I've cleansed you, I've made you holy through my power.

And in response, here's what you're going to do. You're going to make yourselves holy and set apart as a sign of that covenant. I am your God, you are my people. So here's what I want you to do.

It's a physical sign in this day and age for Israel for all those thousands of years. You will take your males and you will circumcise them at a very young age when they're babies. And when you do that, you are physically, literally setting yourself apart from every other nation of the world that did not do circumcision.

[25 : 14] It is a sign of their separation from the world and adherence to God, his love, his law, and his commands. So why would Paul in this section bring this in?

Well, it actually makes a lot of sense. It's a perfect segue into this idea of being that Christ alone is our fulfillment. Here's what he says, in him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without human hands, by putting off the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

So here's what he's saying here, that physical circumcision was a sign of the covenant for Israel, but it was never meant, listen to this, it was never meant to be the full embodiment and fulfillment of the complete covenantal relationship between God and his people.

It was a physical sign, yes, it had value, but it never was meant to go the distance of completing the covenant between God and his people and their sanctification apart from the world.

Putting off the body of the flesh, not with human hands, with the heart, is what he's saying, it's referring to the new covenant that redeems us and makes us new in Christ.

[26 : 26] The old covenant was one of the flesh ratified through physical circumcision, it was a sign of the covenant between God and his people, but circumcision of the heart has always been God's prerogative.

How do we know that? Jeremiah 4, 3-4, here's what God says, he gives us a little snippet into what the purpose of circumcision is, he says this, thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground and sow not among the thorns, circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskin of your heart.

What is he saying there? There's a couple other texts that talk about the circumcision of the heart. In Romans chapter 4, we see a picture of Abraham who is considered righteous before God through faith and not of circumcision, because Paul basically makes the point in Romans 4, circumcision has value to set us apart and dedicate us to God, but here's what you should know, Abraham was promised to be righteous in faith and he wasn't circumcised, meaning this, that through faith in Christ Jesus, the circumcision of our hearts occurs.

We are set apart once and for all for God and for his purposes. Circumcision was the outward sign of the covenant between God and man, like a rancher brands his cattle with his brand to convey ownership, so circumcision was for Israel.

But instead of that one-sided relationship between a rancher and his cattle that the image conveys, God's covenant is actually two-sided, marked by compassionate shepherding and obedient responsive sheep.

[28 : 01] The point of physical circumcision was always to highlight a greater reality, that God wanted his people's hearts set apart to him, not just their bodies.

Church, we have entered into a new covenant by faith, not on the basis of the flesh or the material works of the body, but entirely on Christ's perfect work.

And this happens because Christ purifies our hearts through justification, being declared righteous before God in faith. That is the circumcision of Christ that Paul refers to here when he talks about it at the end of this section.

But not only that, he's purified our hearts, he's circumcised them through his work, not through ours, but in response to that circumcision of the heart, we ratify that purity of heart through something called baptism.

And that gets us into point number three. Let's read verse 11 to 15. It says this. We'll start with actually 12 to 15.

[29 : 08] Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead, and you who were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. Here's what Paul just said.

Through faith we enter into the covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ, which circumcises our hearts, draws us to God with a pure heart for the first time. But not only through that, in faith we come to

Christ, but in faith we also undergo something called baptism.

And what is baptism? Well, that is also tied with circumcision in the Old Testament. But here's what I want to say about baptism. Baptism is our new sign of that covenant. How do we make it real in our lives that I've followed Christ, I've placed my faith and I've turned from my sin.

He's purified my heart. He's circumcised the fat of my heart. Now I have a pure, clean heart ready to serve him. How do I ratify that? How do I make that real in my life? The answer has always been for the church, get baptized.

[30 : 33] Well, why? I mean, okay, get baptized. They go in the tank, do the words, do your testimony, they dunk you under, everybody claps. That's awesome. It's a one-time event. That's not going to sustain my faith throughout all of my life.

If you're like me, that was my view of baptism for a while. And you know what the answer to that is? Actually, that is the sustenance, or at least part of it, for a healthy, long Christian life.

Because being baptized is more than just being dunked in water. Being baptized in its fullness is a holistic image of a new life that has died to its old ways.

So here's what Paul says. How do we get this? He says that we have been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Baptism is that ratification of the work of Christ in our hearts. It is the demonstration of the gospel having transformed us and made us new. It is our identification with the death of Christ, being down in the death of the water, which is what Paul says in Romans, but also being raised out of that death and newness of life just as Jesus rose from the dead three days later.

[32 : 05] Baptism is an outward expression of something that Christ has done inwardly in our hearts. And when a believer gets baptized, they are declaring proudly and joyfully a lot of things, but here's two big ones.

First, being baptized, we declare our new life by the work of Jesus through faith. He has redeemed this life.

But second, being baptized is a declaration that I will live out my new life in him by putting off that flesh daily. And here's what Paul says in verse 12.

I mean, look at this idea. He says, having been buried with him in baptism, which you were also raised with him through faith and the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And listen, and you who were dead, past tense, in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

Here's the image. You've been freed. You are no longer bound by sin and death. You have new life. And now as you look at Jesus and see the forgiveness that he offered, you can move forward in absolute confidence and new life.

[33 : 18] So something we always do here at this church, we have the gospel hand. You've already heard me say it multiple times. It's because it's important. I think it's a really helpful tool to help us understand this gospel. And it's this.

The gospel is the good news that Jesus lived perfectly, died sacrificially, rose victoriously, forgiving my sin if I repent and believe. Well, here's what's amazing. In verse 12 to 15, you see those first three points come out.

Jesus lived perfectly. How do we know that that's in this text? Well, look what it says. It says this in verse 13. You were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

Verse 14. By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. Here's what Paul's saying here. We are freed from the law's demands for righteousness.

Instead, we are freely given the righteousness of Jesus who fulfilled the law perfectly. Did you notice that term legal demands? What that means here is it's referring to spiritual death.

[34 : 18] That because we have not walked the holy life that God commands, because we have not fulfilled the law and obeyed its many instructions to live righteously, the debt incurred by those who break God's law is kept by the law itself.

In other words, it's a laundry list of every sin we've ever committed, past, present, and future. A spiritual IOU of every impure thought, unkind word, unloving attitude, curse, bitterness, forgiveness, and every unforgiveness, and every other unholy deed.

Here's what happens. That debt that was held against us for so long has been canceled. So Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly.

There is no record of debt against him. It's blank. Found perfect in every way, not one offense. Jesus lived perfectly, but then he died sacrificially.

You see this in verse 13 as well. It says this, having forgiven us of all of our trespasses, another legal term, we've broken the law, we've trespassed. Jesus has forgiven us of those. He set them aside by nailing it to the cross is what Paul says.

[35 : 31] This means that instead of Christ taking our sin, excuse me, instead of us taking our sin upon ourselves, Jesus took the deserved wrath that we were owed on the cross and died sacrificially in our place.

And he set this aside nailing it to the cross. Set aside means to take out of the picture. To take it and say this is no longer basic discovery in this courtroom. It's out of the courtroom now.

That's what that term means. Paul said, Jesus has taken your record of debt and he's missed, he's taken it, he's paid for it and it's no longer in the courtroom. It can't be used against you. It's a legal scene we're seeing.

And what does that mean? It means this, that our sin is no longer a factor in how God views us or relates to us. The only matters of consideration are a washed, redeemed child and a holy, loving father now because of Jesus' radical love on the cross.

That is the relationship we now enjoy. And finally, rose victoriously, which is that third finger. You see that here in verse 12 when it says we've been raised with Christ, but then look in verse 15 also.

[36 : 42] He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him. We are freed from the bondage of death.

Instead of living in the hope of rising one day not in newness of life, here's what Jesus has done. He conquers death victoriously and then He allows for us to have something called hope that is actually real and not fake.

Now my wife and I just watched a live action documentary of something called the Franklin Expeditions. These occurred in the 1840s. Two ships went out to find a passageway through the northwest Arctic to try and get all the way over into the Pacific Ocean.

They had very limited maps and technology at this time so they had to just go and find a way through the ice. Now they get stuck in a brutal winter and there's about 200 people on these ships. This was amazing throughout this documentary. The captains constantly get together and they constantly tell each other, we will die. This is not going well. We have pretty much no chance of living.

[37 : 50] We're in the middle of nowhere. Nobody knows where we are. But here's what the captains did the entire show, all 10 episodes, whatever it was. They refused to tell the crew because they wanted them to hope and not give up.

So they told them, hey, we're going to do this. We're going to move. We're going to go. We're going to find a way out. We're going to travel. They gave them that hope so they wouldn't give up. But here's what happened. Spoiler, it never came. That hope was false.

Every single person on those ships died a brutal death in the cold. Some of the victims even of polar bears. There was never any hope.

It was a false hope. And I want to offer to us, hope has two effects on the believer. First, it gives us confidence about our eternal future.

We are promised a bodily resurrection one day after we die here on earth. Therefore, we do not fear death.

[38 : 49] I'm not saying that when death comes upon you, you get really sick or a family member is a life-threatening illness that we shouldn't respond with care and compassion and even a little fear that I'm going to lose this person that I love.

What I'm saying is death in and of itself should never be a source of true angst or fear for us because we have life forevermore one day.

But not only that, hope has two effects on the believer. That's the first one. Here's the second one. It follows the first. Because we are confident that we will live again in eternity, we are confident now in life today.

The hope of eternal life someday produces life here today. when the Christians were taken in post-Jesus Roman, the Roman world.

They were taken and they were brutalized and martyred in the roars of the Circus Maximus constantly. Thousands and thousands of Christians placed to be massacred. Women, even children

as documented.

[39 : 53] And there's stories of these Christians standing boldly, singing hymns as they were killed. Brutally. Why? How in the world could a Christian do that in that moment?

Because they know they have life forevermore in Jesus, now and forever. Our hope is not imaginary, dear brothers and sisters, as it was to those faded explorers in the northern Arctic. It is more sure than the warmth of the sun heating our faces in the light of the morning. Our hope of new life is more sure than the universe as we know it existing tomorrow just as it does today. That reality that exists in the eternal realm of God's divine power is surely of infinite times more certain than any temporal reality we could cling to here on earth.

We will be raised one day just as we hope today or right now. So here's our final application for the morning. Identify with Jesus through saving faith and find hope forever.

[40 : 57] Be made alive today by faith. But not only that, if you, I want to make a specific call here, if you have never been baptized and you say, hey, I love Jesus, I followed Him, I've identified with Him, He's circumcised my heart, I find my fulfillment in Him, I have given my life to Christ, but you have never undergone baptism.

Here's my encouragement to you this morning. take a moment today or this week to seriously consider this question. How is my faith in Jesus clearly been shown?

And I pray that as you answer that question, if you've not been baptized, the Lord would bring to your mind the beauty of being baptized, of identifying fully with Christ in His life, death, and resurrection, that you too might be able to walk in that newness of life that Paul's talking about. It is our privilege, church, to call Jesus our Savior and it is a privilege to live for Him each and every day with the hope, the glorious hope of resurrection life.

Lord, we pray this morning that as we worship You, as we sing to You, as we remember You by looking at Your Word, Lord, that You would do what You promise in this passage to make us alive.

[42 : 24] So Lord, I pray that as Your people, we would dedicate ourselves to making our philosophies about You, to finding our fulfillment in You, and to finding all of our life in You.

Lord, we know that baptism is a wonderful, beautiful thing and God, I pray that for anyone in here who has not been baptized or maybe is considering that, would You encourage them with Your Spirit to identify with Jesus in complete fullness and it starts with faith and it's ratified through baptism.

So Lord, we pray for baptisms in this church, we pray for baptisms in this world, Lord, that there might be more people that have made themselves branded with Your love.

God, help us to understand these truths and I pray that anything that has been said that was not clear or was not true would be stripped away. Any worldly philosophy, any worldly ideas, Lord, that only the philosophy of Christ would stand in our midst.

We love You, Lord, in Your name we pray. Amen.